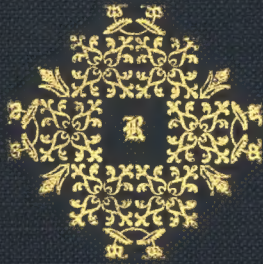


# POEMS



ALICE MARGARET ROWAN

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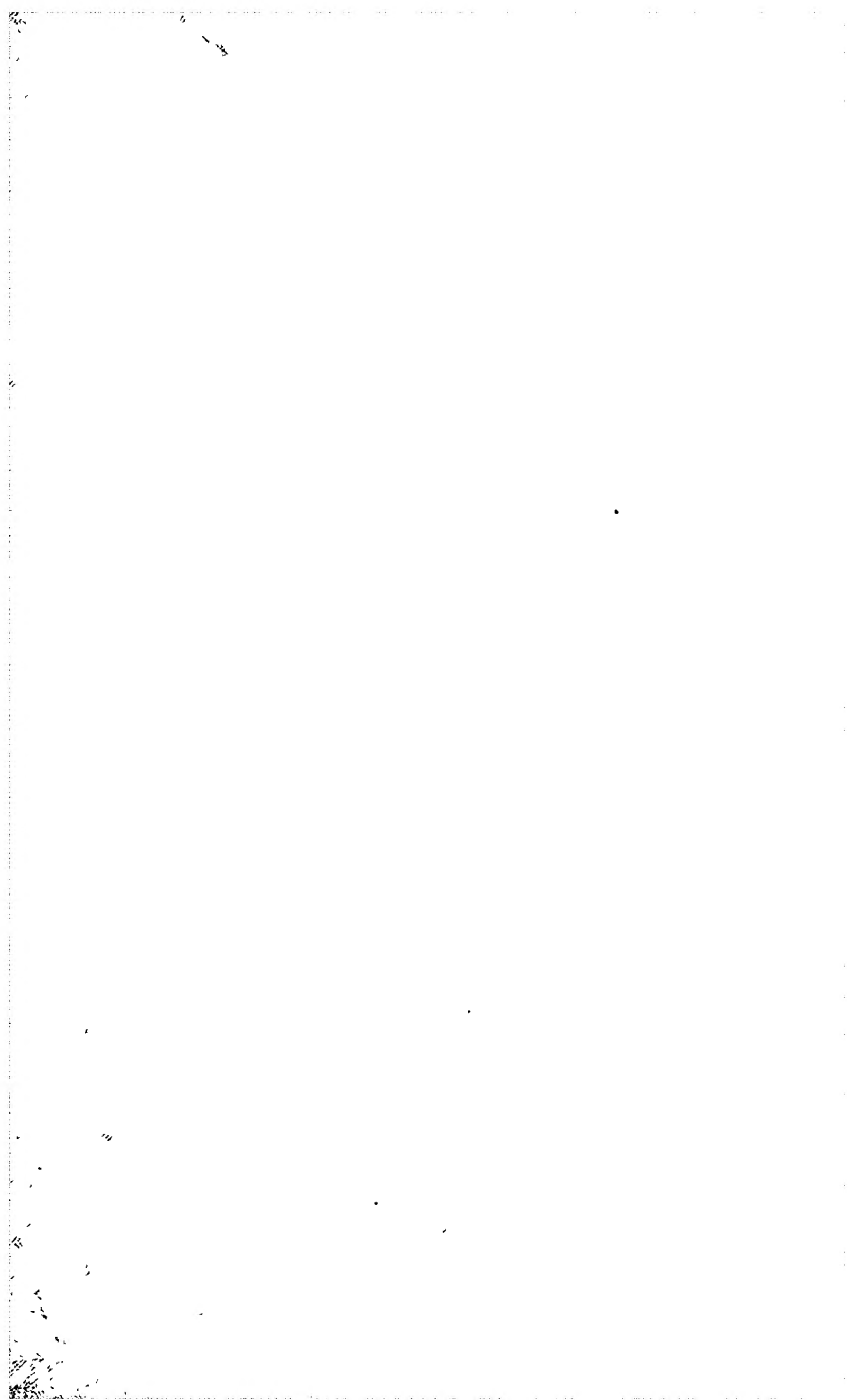
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## POEMS



# POEMS

BY

ALICE MARGARET ROWAN

WITH FOREWORD

BY

The Rev. Robert C. Johnstone, LL.D.

LECTURER IN LITURGICS AT ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, WINNIPEG



WINNIPEG  
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TO MY DEAR MOTHER AND  
COMPANION, I LOVINGLY IN-  
SCRIBE MY FIRST EFFORT,  
THESE FEW POEMS.

## FOREWORD

It has been a great pleasure to me to read the MSS of the Poems contained in this little volume. There is a wonderful sweetness and naiveté in the writings of my young friend; in not a few places her theme and expression are so full of inspiration and uplift that one is constrained to look forward with eager anticipation for still further developments. She is a sweetly natural singer—one of those who—

*"Lisp in numbers, for the numbers came."*

She does not ask for public patronage or approval, but, with a thoughtfulness and simplicity all her own, submits to the strongly expressed wishes of her friends, and sends forth her little barque to carry to these friends some of the gifts out of her treasure-house

ROBERT C. JOHNSTONE

*The Lodge, Winnipeg,  
October 22, 1924.*

## OUR 'TOBA

HERE's to our 'Toba,  
The pride of the west'  
Of all Western Varsities,  
Ours is the best

She wins on the track;  
She leads in the hall;  
Her name nothing lacks;  
She's Queen of them all'

When the score's going wrong,  
And you're tempted to yield,  
Play up for "Old 'Toba"  
In hall and in field.

Go on with the game,  
Play up and be fair;  
She'll be proud of your name,  
If you've only been square

So let's all yell for 'Toba,  
Where'er we may be,  
And add to her fame  
In the years that will be.

*November, 1922.*

## IF I SHOULD DIE

If I should die to-night,  
I wonder who would mourn  
That one more soul had winged its flight  
By evening shadows borne?

I wonder if the gentle snow  
Would come to shelter me,  
Or if the stormy winds that blow,  
With leaves would cover me;

Or if the happy little bird  
That sings in yonder tree,  
Would cease its song and be the third  
To come and comfort me.

Mayhap the trees, in stately grace,  
Like sentinels, that stand  
So close beside my resting place,  
Would stretch to me a hand.

Or would the realm of Nature wide,  
And all of God's mankind  
Go on, unheeding, in the tide  
That my soul leaves behind?

O you, my friends on earth, I pray,  
Keep not your love till then,  
When I am unresponsive clay,  
Beyond the vale of men!

*November 14, 1922.*

## W I N T E R

AUTUMN days are slowly dying,  
Soon will come the flakes a-flying  
That all through winter will be lying  
Over hill and plain.

Then the lake, the stream, the river  
Will beneath the fierce lash quiver,  
Till congealed they'll seem forever,  
Pure, transparent stone.

Then the winter cold and dreary,  
And the north-wind howling, eery,  
Stay with us till we are weary,  
Weary of the snow.

But, like autumn, winter passes,  
And the ice-floes in their masses  
Filling up the hills' crevasses,  
Melt in tears again.

*November 17, 1922.*

## LOVE

Love is like new-awakened flowers,  
Opening gladly to the rain,  
Seeking but the vernal showers,  
Fleeing but from grief and pain;

Love is like the bird of Heaven,  
Flying upward free of wing,  
Going not where it is bidden,  
Choosing its own place to sing;

Love lives on through countless ages,  
Countless blessings to us sends,  
And the powers of all the sages  
Cannot change its wilful trends!

*January, 1923.*

## MEMORY

FAIR memory, visionary angel of the past,  
That through the dimly mirrored halls of time dost glide,  
Bring me to-night from out thy time-worn treasure-chest  
Some relic of its hidden lore of yestertide.

Come from the shadows, and with gentle hand lift thou  
The curtain from past years,—Oh, lift the veil—  
Or bear me yonder to thy shadow-land, where now  
My phantom-ships of yesteryear in silence sail.

*January, 1923.*

## TO A VIOLET

O LOVELY flower, that grows 'mid fern and moss  
Down in the forest glade,  
Where, in their pride, the stately lilies toss  
Amid the light and shade.

Thou artless dweller of the forest wild,  
Deep hidden from the sight,  
Thy simple beauty from the lily-child,  
Steals more than half the light.

Dear, simple forest flower demure and rare,—  
Impurpled velvet face,—  
Would that the race of men might share  
Thy modesty and grace!

*February, 1923.*

## THE STREAM

WASHING the pebbles white, kissing the lea,  
Flowing far out of sight down to the sea,  
  
Lashing the happy trees grown by thy brink,  
Scenting the summer-breeze, stooping to drink,  
  
Smoothing the mossy stones, courting the lea,  
Cooing in ripple tones, singing for me,  
  
Coaxing the minnow-wights on to the sea,  
Chasing the moonbeam-lights hidden in thee,  
  
Rippling, carolling child of the sea,  
You have enchanted the woodlands and me.

*June, 1923.*



## A TALE OF THE FLOWERS

IN an old and tangled garden,  
Round an ivy-mantled wall,  
I wandered at the twilight-hour  
To hear the cuckoo call.

Deep silence hovered around me,  
The dew was on the grass,  
When, from their magic-hidden haunts,  
I saw the fairies pass.

They gathered round the fountain  
That babbled fairy-tunes,  
Like the music in the hollow reeds  
Along the golden dunes.

Their Fairy-Prince cried gaily:—  
"Go, seek ye far and wide,  
And bring me back the rarest flower  
To grace my bonnie bride."

Out went the petal-seekers,  
Their fairy-lamps a-glow  
To scan the cultured fragrance  
Of the blossoms, row on row.

Some sought the azure Larkspur,  
Some the swaying Columbine,  
While others' footsteps wandered  
Where the Honeysuckles twine;

And more sought blushing Roses,  
Or haply Lilies pure,  
But ever and anon they passed  
The Violet demure,

In her secluded bower,  
Far from the cultured beds,  
Where the boldly whispering tulips stood,  
Flaunting their slender heads.

"Poor, humble little flower,"  
So said her sisters fair,  
"Whoe'er would think to pluck thee  
From thy mossy hidden lair?"

But soon that secret bower  
Shone 'neath a fairy-lamp,  
And a humble, kindly searcher  
Had invaded the hidden camp.

Then, when the search was over,  
And the fairy-lamps returned,  
The fairies wondered vaguely  
At the flowers their Prince had spurned.

Loved for its purple glory  
And its dainty velvet face,  
The violet was chosen for  
Its modesty and grace.

*February, 1923.*

## LITTLE LADDIE

SMILING little cherub-face,  
Eyes of deepest blue;  
Hair that never stays in place  
'Spite of all we do,  
Laughing as you romp along  
With your merriment and song,  
Surely you could do no wrong,  
Little soldier true

Are you lost in fairy-dreams,  
Little man, so soon?  
' Is the world quite what it seems  
Up beyond the moon?  
Dancing, floating, skimming on  
Over the sky the whole night long,  
Mystical emblem of evensong,  
Beautiful golden moon!

See the angels overhead,  
Look, while yet you can,  
Watching round your trundle-bed,  
Little sleepy man.  
Are you gathering flowerets gay  
All along the milky way,  
While the angels smile and say  
"Bless thee, little man"?

Now you 're happy, gay and free,  
Life's a jolly thing!  
But remember always be  
Square in everything.  
Be a sport along life's way,  
Live a clean life day by day,  
Never shirking, while you play  
Fair in everything.

*March, 1923.*

## REAPING TIME AT EVE

I LOOK towards the sun-laved West,  
Across the ripening fields of grain  
That Mother Nature's hand has blessed  
With summer-sun and frequent rain,—  
How much we owe that bounteous hand  
For this, our wondrous prairie land!

The wild flowers nod their dainty heads  
Beside the ripening ears of corn,  
And there the alien mustard treads  
That laughs our struggling grain to scorn.  
Free children of our foster land,  
Would you mar the fruit of the toiling hand?

The day is dying fast; too soon  
The summer sun has sunk to rest—  
But yonder is the harvest-moon  
To light the field and still the nest—  
Gone is the Day-Star from his stand  
To hail the morn in Sunrise-Land.

And, while the realms of nature sleep,  
I hear the sounds I love so well;  
Low bleatings of the drowsy sheep,  
Soft tinklings of the pasture-bell;  
And in my heart is struck a chord.  
In unison with Nature's Lord.

*April, 1923.*

## THE WIND

*"My son, it is the creaking  
of the sycamore," said the Father.*  
—Hall Caine.

O WIND, that moans in the sycamore,  
And lulls the birds to rest,  
Will you pause in caressing fragrance,  
And give peace to my troubled breast?

Breathe the cool peace of the mountain rills,  
The calm peace of the plain,  
All that is earthly fades away,—  
You will not come again.

Across the dark horizon's haze,  
Far as the eye can see,  
To-morrow, you will reign supreme  
On the unconscious sea.

Then blow you, wind of the prairie wide,  
And blow you wind of the sea,  
Your caverns deep a secret keep—  
Does Gloria think of me?

*June, 1923.*

## MY SHIP

THE sombre sky is mirrored in the sea;  
The swallows wheel and dip so merrily,  
As the old ship comes a-sailing back to me,  
Awaiting on the sands.

See yonder ship that comes a-sailing in,  
A-drifting o'er the water's peaceful brim,  
Lured homeward by the old bell's evening hymn  
From the lighthouse on the sands.

It is my ship, long since put out to sea,  
Wherein my hopes and prayers lie constantly,  
And now she comes a-sailing back to me,  
Awaiting on the sands.

*July 8, 1923.*

## UNBELIEF

*"For me, who believe in  
God as much and more than anyone."  
—Voltaire.*

THERE is no Unbelief  
In earth, or sea, or sky,  
In sorrow, pain, or grief,  
In life, or when we die.

Who close their eyes in sleep,  
From which new strength is born,  
Must trust that God will keep  
His watch until the morn.

The man who sows with care  
The seed in tilled sod,  
His needful crop to bear,  
Must put his trust in God.

The sailor on the sea  
Must weather wind and storm,  
And yet he hopes to see,  
Home-faces on the morn.

And when our souls take flight,  
And leave their house of clay,  
They seek 'mid shades of night  
Dawn of Eternal Day.—

There is no Unbelief  
In earth, or sea, or sky,  
For men find God in grief,  
And seek Him when they die.

*August, 1923.*

## LOST MARGARET

LONG years have come and gone in hopeless gloom,  
Since last we saw amid the roses' bloom  
The rival of the sunniest day in June—  
Lost Margaret!

With flowing hair, like bands of living gold,  
And laughter sweet that joy of living told,  
And tripping feet that danced along the shore  
One morn she vanished to be seen no more,—  
Fair Margaret!

That morn, a shroud-like mist came from the sea,  
Spread round the cove, and far across the lea.  
Opened the gates of Immortality  
For Margaret.

But when at last my ship puts out to sea,  
I'll find her in the mist awaiting me,  
That cold grey mist that led her feet astray,  
Decreed for me my solitary way.  
Lost Margaret!

*July 4, 1923.*

## CALEDONIA

We have left thee, Caledonia,  
Left thee for a newer shore,  
Where thy purple scented mountains  
Rise to greet us, nevermore!

Over moor and glen and highland,  
Where thy martyrs fought and died,  
Spirits of the past are mourning  
A forsaken countryside.

Phantom voices, anguished, weeping,  
Souls disturbed from spheres above,  
Stealing through the mist and shadow,  
Mourn with thee departed love.

Other lands have loved thee, Scotia,  
For thy noble race of men,  
Children of the Covenanters,  
Martyred by a Tyrant's pen!

Cease thy mourning, Caledonia,  
For thy children love thee yet;  
Newer lands shall hear thy teachings,  
And thy hills shall none forget!

*September, 1923.*



## REVERIE

By the rocky shores of my Island Home,  
Where the sea-birds float on the rising foam,  
When the misty ships drift in from sea,  
It is there, in the Highlands, my heart would be.

Where the purple hills in the noontide sleep,  
And the shaggy herds wind the rugged steep,  
By the Loch that dreams on its Highland breast,  
It is there, forever, my soul would rest.

*September 25, 1923*

## TRUTH

WHEN I saw Phoebus painting in the dawn  
His rainbow mantle over sky and sea,  
I thought upon the ways that I had gone  
In search of Truth, and how despairingly,  
Like many visioners, I left behind  
The unseen pathway that I thought to find.

I sought for Truth in philosophic lore  
Among the southern seas, and all in vain;  
But now, at Nature's feet, as I before  
Knelt as a child, I worship once again;  
For, in the golden mystery of the sand,  
I see th' Eternal Being's mighty hand

Some think of Truth as being set apart,  
A yearning after things of good repute,  
But I have learned it dwells within the heart,  
And speaks in actions, when the voice is mute.  
If we would follow Truth's unbending rod,  
We first must worship at the feet of God!

*October 15, 1923.*

## HOMeward BOUND

HOMeward with the purpling sun,  
Homeward when the day is done,  
When the dew-kissed clovers sleep,  
And the stars from heaven peep,  
We shall rest in the calm content  
If our day for good was spent.

Homeward when life's day is done,  
Homeward when our course is run,  
Where no tear shall ever fall,  
Nor night-shadows dim the wall,  
We shall rest at eventide  
On that mystic Other Side.

*October, 1923*

## TO MARION

THE North-Wind's crooning voice and low  
Claims thee a daughter fair  
Of the bountiful north with its ice and snow,  
That her joys and her toils you may share.

O, daughter of the Northern Pines!  
Your eyes are the blue of her skies,  
Your heart is the gold of her distant mines,  
In your smile, her spirit lies.

Then be true to the code of the great Northland;  
Be strong, be brave, be fair,  
And she will bestow with lavish hand  
Her treasures beyond compare!

*January 15, 1924*

## A U T U M N

I HEAR the gentle dripping  
Of the crystal rain-drops slipping  
From the eaves, dripping eaves, dripping eaves.

And for the fields now dying,  
I hear the wind's low sighing  
In the trees, sighing trees, sighing trees,

For autumn tints are shading  
The leaflets that are fading  
In the breeze, fading breeze, fading breeze.

And autumn winds are calling  
To the rhythmic falling  
Of the leaves, falling leaves, falling leaves.

But after every sadness  
A sweet harmonious gladness  
Follows pain, gnawing pain, gnawing pain.

And so I do remember  
That after bleak November,  
Brighter days come again, come again.

*September 10, 1924.*

## NIGHT SOLITUDE

O SOLITUDE of Eve! What peace is there,  
When earth sleeps softly in the arms of night,  
And drowsy spheres awake to trim their lamps,  
And hang them in the sable firmament.  
O Night! thy shadowed curtain doth conceal  
The things of day—the toiling and the tears;  
And solitary souls commune with thee  
And find a solace in thy solitude.

*September 10, 1924.*

## BEYOND TO-MORROW

### I

WHERE distant Persians dip the seas for pearl,  
And luscious vines their clinging tendrils curl,  
Where Iran's vale in earthen chalice keeps  
The turquoise blue, and skilful fingers twirl

### II

Their silken threads and weave them in the loom,—  
Come, go with me where Rosa's gardens bloom  
And hold with their alluring fragrance deep  
The souls of poets chained, both late and soon.

### III

I say 'of late,' because *there* dwelled of old,  
Cradled in Nashaipur, ere Time had told  
Its thousand and two hundred changing years,  
Omar Khayyam, the bard, now shrined in mould.

IV

Under the shadow of his orient skies,  
Beneath the dust of roses, low he lies;  
Where floats the perfume of the vine beside  
The river's brim, his great soul earthwards flies.

V

And when the dews of evening kissed the rose  
In Omar's garden, where the river flows,  
Two lovers lingered in a fond embrace,  
Forgetting time and heedless of repose.

VI

"My Beautiful, let us forget the world—  
Wherein, like meteors through the darkness hurled,  
We came, knowing not whence, nor whither bound—  
The Mystery that will not be unfurled!

VII

"And let us lose long this shadowed path,  
Our doubts and fears, as even Omar hath  
Of old—come, sip with me the Ruby wine,  
My Pearl—Life has no aftermath!

VIII

"What seek you here?" a ponderous voice doth say.  
"We would commune with Khayyam on the way  
Of pleasure, wine and love whereof he taught;—  
We live not for to-morrow, but to-day".

IX

Then through the endless labyrinth he came,  
A vision clad in purple mists and flame,  
With voice like murmurings of distant bells,  
Tolling a deep and everlasting pain.

## X

"The Ruby-Cup's last drops will turn to tears,  
While Bacchus in derision scoffs and sneers;  
Though wine obliterate the back and forth of time,  
It never can erase the wasted years"

## XI

"But wherefore, Khayyam, dost thou agonize,  
And thy beloved Ruby-Cup despise?"—  
"O thou, my brother, list what I shall say,  
And weigh it well, ere chance beyond thee flies;

## XII

"When I did steep my very soul in wine,  
To drown the doubts and sorrows that were mine,  
I lost a thing more precious, yea, than gold,  
Courage in self, and faith in The Divine

## XIII

"I was a slave I sold my heritage  
For dross; yet lingers on from age to age  
That yearning after something I have lost.  
O to be free, to break the chains of vassalage!"—

## XIV

"Thou sayest well, old friend, yet why dost thou  
Revoke thy ponderings beneath this bough,  
Long years ago, when thou did'st wish to change  
The scheme of things, yet knew not how?"—

## XV

" 'Tis true, I heeded not the uncertain morrow,  
And heeded less the cry of human sorrow.  
I knew there was a God. What mattered that,  
Since His Omnipotence, I could not borrow?

XVI

"But when Death's lonely Caravan did come  
To bear my soul beyond the setting sun,  
Death said in accents pitying and stern:  
'God waits the answer for thy deeds, my son'."

XVII

"Hold Khayyam! say, what reasons it to try  
Our feeble strength against The Will on high?  
He made us what we are, we walk  
The path He planned, and must until we die."

XVIII

"Take heed, my brother! though I oft did say:—  
Why should Almighty God destroy the clay  
He formed? It is not He that would *unmake*  
His image; we ourselves do pave the downward way."

XIX

And, as he spoke, the vesper-hour was filled  
With mystic harmonies that pulsed and thrilled  
Along the air and echoed on the shore  
Like the music of a thousand spheres distilled.

XX

Then, as the echoes died, on the wings of night  
The vision fled forever from their sight  
Into the dim and still uncharted air,  
Beyond the moving spheres' translucent light.

*September, 1924.*





27  
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